



THE DOLPHIN FLEET

The People and History Behind Our Club Boats



Written by Walt Schneebeil

with help from Mark O'Hara and Matthew C. Sheridan



JOHN WIELAND — A Six-oared Barge. Built by Al Rogers of Alameda and received by the club in June of 1887, the *JOHN WIELAND* has been the queen of the Dolphin fleet since its arrival.

John Wieland, who is credited with the founding of the Dolphin Club, came to Philadelphia in 1849 as an immigrant from Germany. Early in 1851 he caught "gold fever" and made the journey to California, where he mined in the region of the south fork of the Yuba River.

Having been successful in his search for gold, he moved to San Francisco and went into the baking business. Wieland later bought into the prospering Philadelphia Brewery and finally became its sole proprietor. It was the largest and most successful such business on the Pacific Coast during that time.

John Wieland was burned to death in his home in January of 1885 at age 55. The barge, *JOHN WIELAND*, was given to the Dolphin Club by the Wieland family.



VIKING — A Double, built in 1915. The Dolphin Club's master boatbuilder, Jon Beilinski, submitted an article for *Wooden Boat Magazine* in 1981 that said: "In 1915 two of the carpenters who worked in the Car Barn on Washington Street decided to build a two-man rowing boat in their spare time. She was named the *VIKING*, and spent the first twenty years of her life in northern coastal California on the Russian River. After one of the builders, who was also her owner, died, the survivor donated the boat to the Dolphin Club."

CHARLES FARRELL — A Double, built in 1917. Charles "Pop" Farrell was born in San Francisco in June of 1868. He joined the Dolphin Club in May of 1891. For most of his membership period Pop was involved in the struggle to secure Black Point Cove, now known as Aquatic Park, as a public recreation area. (See "History of Aquatic Park, Part I", Spring 1999 issue and Part II, page 16 of this issue.) This dream was realized shortly before Pop's death in February of 1933 at the age of 64.





JAMES CRONIN — *A Double, built in 1938.* James John Cronin was born in San Francisco in August, 1866, and joined the Dolphin Club in May of 1891. A club member for sixty-four years, Jim, at one time or another, held practically every Dolphin Club office, including president, and served as Club Treasurer for decades. He did not miss a Club-to-Ocean Beach Hike from the first one in 1892 until the 1950's. Jim was secretary of the Pacific Association of Amateur Oarsmen (P.A.A.O.) for thirty-five years, participating in just about every association social or athletic event held from 1891 until his death. Jim Cronin died in January of 1956 at the age of 89 and was sorely missed by the Dolphin Club's entire membership.

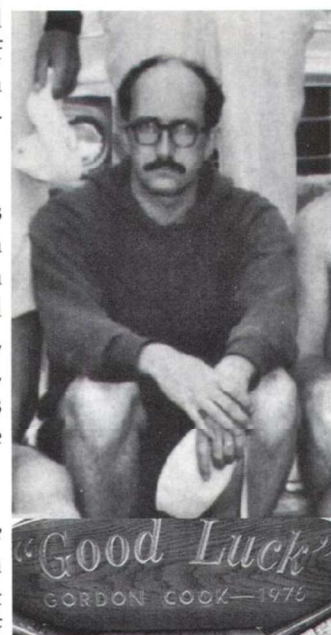
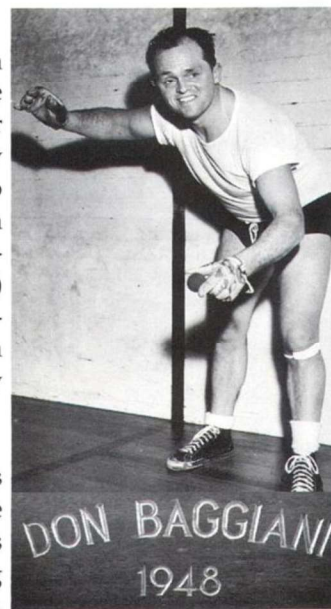
LAWTON HUGHES — *A Double, built in 1938.* Lawton Hughes was born in San Francisco in December of 1899 and joined the Dolphin Club in March 1919. Like Jim Cronin, Lawton was totally committed to the Dolphin Swimming and Boating Club, holding many club offices: President in 1938 and 1966, Rowing and Swimming Commissioner for many years, and Treasurer for over two decades. He was sculling champion of the Pacific Coast in his class in the 1920's and 1930's and swam the Club Golden Gate Swim fourteen times. An aquatic legend, Lawton Hughes died in August of 1982 at the age of 82.

SYD FOSTER — *A Single, built in 1948.* Sydney Foster was born in San Francisco in July 1892, and joined the Dolphin Club in March of 1913. Sid participated in many Club Golden Gate Swims, winning the swim in 1921, 1922, and 1924. Sid was one of the first to swim from the Club, around Alcatraz, and back. A sixty-year member of the Club, Syd died in June, 1973, at the age of 80. This is the only boat in the fleet that has a misspelled stern piece. Syd's ashes were scattered at the Golden Gate.

DON BAGGIANI — *A single, built by Bill Richards in 1948 in the Dolphin Club boathouse.* Don Baggiani, who joined the Dolphin Club in March of 1935, was a successful commission merchant at the S.F. Produce Market for forty-five years. A member of the Dolphin Club for sixty-three years, Don was an enthusiastic swimmer and handball player. He swam the Golden Gate several times and served as both Swimming and Handball Commissioner. The Spring 1999 *Dolphin Log* issue featured, as a tribute, a photo of Don's boat containing many of his athletic trophies. Don died in January of 1999 at the age of 91.

DINO LANDUCCI — *A single, built by Bill Richards in 1948 in the Dolphin Club boathouse.* Dino joined the Dolphin Club in February 1935 and was one of the few hardy souls who held the Dolphin Club together during the difficult WW II and postwar years of the 1940's. Rowing and handball were Dino's sports and he pursued them almost until the time of his death in February of 1995. A sixty-year member of the Dolphin Club, Dino was 88 years.

THE GOOD LUCK — *A Single, given to the Club by Gordon Cook and delivered on February 26, 1976.* Gordon Cook joined the Dolphin Club in May of 1960. Gordon specified that his name

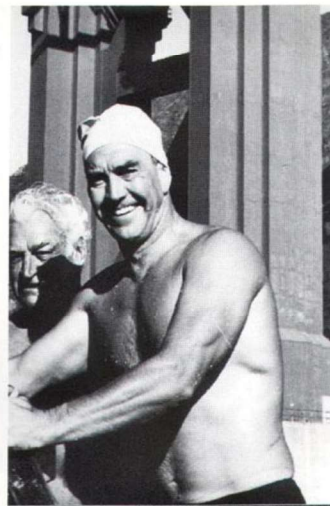




"Horse"
EMILIO MASSUCCO — 1974

be left off of the boat's stern piece, but after his death his name was added. Gordon was a prominent Bay Area artist and teacher of art. He was a rower, swimmer, and Dolphin Club president. Gordon Cook died in August of 1985 at age 57.

JOE BRUNO — *A Single, built in 1988 by Jon Beilinski and the boathouse crew.* Joe Bruno joined the Dolphin Club in September of 1933. Participating in many sports, but especially swimming, Joe became the all-time superathlete of the Club, completing an unbelievable sixty-one Golden Gate Swims from 1933, when the Golden Gate Bridge was still under construction, to 1993. He also swam in the old Chronicle Gate Swim and in other swims too numerous to include here. His sixty-one Gate crossings are featured in *The Guinness Book of Records*. Joe is "taking it easy" these days in his home in Burlingame and is missed by all his swimming buddies.



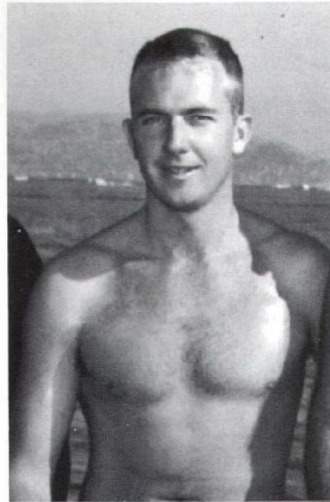
STU EVANS
1981



JIM SMALL
1981

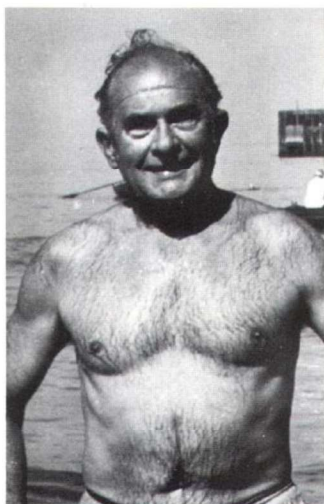
"CECCO" FRANK MENNUCCI *A Single, built in 1988 by Jon Beilinski and crew at the same time as the JOE BRUNO.* Frank joined the Dolphin Club in March of 1941. Frank Mennucci's services to the Club are too numerous to list here. Frank was a swimmer, handball player, oarsman, and connoisseur of food, drink, and other earthly delights. Cecco died in December of 1997 at the age of 88. The Club has still not recovered from his death and he remains the central character in many Club tales and reminiscences.

THE "HORSE" — *A Single, built in 1974.* Emilio "Horse" Massucco joined the Dolphin Club in February of 1948. Horse was born and lived most of his life in North Beach and worked as a longshoreman for many years. Horse Massucco paid for all the materials used in his namesake, which was crafted by Herman Zahler and christened on October 26, 1974. Emilio Massucco died in January of 1988 at the age of 74.



STEVE CUTHBERT
1981

STU EVANS — *A Single, built in 1981.* Major Stewart Evans joined the Dolphin Club in August of 1966 and entered our swimming program immediately, coming in 11th out of 68 in the Gate swim of 1966. At 12:02 p.m. Monday, August 28, 1967 the then Lt. Col. Stewart Evans landed at Point Bolinas, 13 hours, 44 minutes, and 52 seconds after entering the water at the southern Farallone Island, the first and only person to swim from the Farallones to the mainland. Prior to this historic swim, Stu Evans swam the Catalina Channel (23 miles) in August of 1959. In October of 1995 I met the son of Stewart Evans, who told me that his father had died on January 9, 1977 at Fort Dix, New Jersey.



FRED HOWARD
DSBC

JIM SMALL — *A Single, built in 1981.* Jim Small joined the Dolphin Club in September of 1961 and won the Golden Gate Swim that same year. On October 20, 1963 while attempting a Sausalito swim with other Dolphins, he was struck by a fishing boat that severed both of his legs. Although he survived



GLADYS AUSTIN
1987

(Continued on page 18)

Continued from page 6

for three days of surgery, during which 56 pints of blood were used, he died on October 23, 1963 at 27 years of age.

STEVE CUTHBERT — *A Single, built in 1981.* Steve Cuthbert joined the Dolphin Club in July of 1962. A student and lifeguard in the East Bay, Steve was one of the club's top swimmers. Steve later joined the United States Air Force and became a jet pilot, flying F-4E Phantoms. Major Steve Cuthbert was shot down over North Vietnam on July 3, 1972 and was killed. His remains were returned to the U.S. in September of 1990. Steve was 29 years old.

FRED HOWARD — *A single. Dr.*

Frederick Howard, a prominent San Francisco urologist, joined the Dolphin Club in May of 1967. "Doc" Howard was a popular Dolphin who participated in most swims and missed few Dolphin social events. He was the attending physician on the Stu Evans Farallones swim and on many other long-distance swims. Dr. Fred Howard died in May of 1972 at age 58.

GLADYS AUSTIN — *A Fiberglass Single, built in 1987.* Gladys Austin was a lifelong rower, first in New Jersey, and later in Santa Barbara, California. The boat is a memorial to her and was given to the club by her son, Dolphin Club member Dr. George Austin of Santa Barbara, in 1987. Gladys Austin died at age 94.

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DOLPHIN SWIMMING & BOATING CLUB

Annual Membership Meeting

September 15, 1999 at 7:00 p.m.
Staib Room • Dolphin Club

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Continued from page 13

taking first in the run, the lack of depth hurt us in the overall point total. This year, Ruben Hechanova has agreed to manage our newly inspired competitive team's attempt to wrest back the trophy from our neighbor. Laura Merkl (swimmers), Louise Bea (rowers), and Anthony DuComb (runners) will be co-captains and recruiters. Certainly, all of those who want a final warm-up before the Escape from Alcatraz on October 17th should consider joining the effort.

So mark your calendars, watch the bulletin board, and enjoy of your swims, wherever they may be.

Continued from page 6

the Fall issue of the Dolphin Log is September 15, 1999. Feel free to contribute stories, ideas, photos, drawings, sketches, cartoons or archives that you think would be of interest to Dolphins. Leave your material in our box in the Staib Room, mail it to the Dolphin Club care of the editors, email it to sheridansf@aol.com or janchris@pacbell.net, or approach us in person.

South Ends' Upcoming Swim Schedule

August

09 - Fort Point, 30 - Golden Gate

September

06 - Yacht Harbor

13 - Club Summer Alcatraz

October 4 - Anita Rock

Dolphins are encouraged to help pilot South End swims (member-only swims). Please check with the Boathouse Captain or Swim Commissioner if you have any questions.

Then and Now Answers
1 - Jon Nakamura, 2 - George Brennan, 3 - Pavla Podolska,
4 - Tobias and Phil Kohlenberg, 5 - Mineko Gallie,
6 Anne Sasaki, 7 - Carlos Bea (right side)